

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request entry of the Amendment and reconsideration of the claims. Claims 16-17, 19-21, and 23-24 have been canceled without prejudice. Applicants submit the Amendment places the claims in condition for allowance. After entry of the Amendment, claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 18, and 22 will be pending. The Examiner indicated claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 18 and 22 are allowable.

Obviousness

Claims 16-17, 19-21, and 23-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,099,832 (Mickle et al.) in view of WO97/44070 (Shapiro et al.). Without acquiescing to the rejection and solely for the purpose of advancing prosecution, claims 16-17, 19-21, and 23-24 have been canceled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the canceled subject matter in a continuation application. The rejection is therefore moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Written Description

Claims 16-17, 19-21, and 23-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Without acquiescing to the rejection and solely for the purpose of advancing prosecution, claims 16-17, 19-21, and 23-24 have been canceled without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the canceled subject matter in a continuation application. The rejection is therefore moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Summary

In view of the above Amendment and Remarks, Applicants submit the claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request removal of the finality, entry of the Amendment, and consideration of the Remarks. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (612) 332-5300.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: _____

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